

# EXTRA TO THE Hongkong Daily Press.

SUNDAY, 2ND JUNE, 1918.

## THE WAR.

### PROBABLE ABANDONMENT OF RHEIMS.

#### RACE AGAINST TIME FOR RESERVES.

#### GERMANS CLAIM 35,000 PRISONERS.

#### FIGHTING INCREASING IN INTENSITY.

#### SITUATION VIEWED WITH CONFIDENCE BY THE FRENCH.

##### Franco-Belgian front.

###### LATEST CABLES.

[THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY.]

###### THE BRITISH FRONT.

###### GERMAN POST RUSHED.

LONDON, May 31st.  
1.20 p.m.

Sir Douglas Haig reports:—We rushed a German post south-eastward of Arras and took a few prisoners. A few were also taken in patrol encounters north-eastward of Ypres.

The enemy raided a post north-eastward of Robecq and a few British are missing. Hostile artillery was active in the Villers, Bretonneux and Albert sectors and between Festubert and Clarence river.

###### PROBABLE ABANDONMENT OF RHEIMS.

LONDON, May 31st.  
7.25 p.m.

In accordance with the precedent of previous offensives the German advance yesterday slackened considerably in both the centre and on the wings. An encouraging feature, compared with March, is that the slackening occurred after four days, but anxiety is undiminished.

The abandonment of Rheims seems inevitable. The Germans are nearing the Marne where there is the Paris-Châlons railway, which is the main communication with Paris and the Verdun line.

The battle represents a wedge driven in the Allied front, with its point twenty miles from the line held a week ago.

#### RACE AGAINST TIME FOR RESERVES.

The main factor in arresting the enemy's rush has been the arrival of the Allied reserves, but it is recognised that the Allies have a most difficult task in preventing a further development of the enemy's success. The battle, indeed, has developed into a race against time for reserves.

###### ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT FEATS IN WARFARE.

Only now are details arriving showing the fearful strain, and the splendid heroism and comradeship in arms of the Anglo-French defenders, which saved the situation, inspiring confidence in the ultimate issue.

Correspondents emphasise that the retreat over the Aisne was one of the most brilliant feats in warfare, both as regards calm generalship and the courage of the troops. Ground was repeatedly defended to the last man. British officers were seen holding bridges to the last moment and then they were killed when they blew them up.

The outstanding episode was the defence of Craonne by one British and one French Colonial Division against double the number of Germans whose initial gas attack was followed by an attack by tanks in mass.

Both remained constantly in touch during the retirement. The British even counter-attacked in the hope of recapturing Craonne and failed chiefly owing to the tanks' flanking fire.

There is no prospect of a lull in the fighting. Indeed, with both sides bringing up reserves, fighting is reported to be increasing in intensity.

The Allied airmen are beginning to assert their superiority, and as first class Allied troops are now engaged there is an appreciable prospect of restoring the situation.

The possibility of a big attack developing shortly on the British Front is quite on the cards in view of reports of German activity at many points.

###### THILLOIS RETAKEN.

LONDON, May 31st.

The French communiqué, of which the first portion is published among the earlier cables, continues:—In the centre the enemy succeeded in slightly advancing in the region north of the Marne. Farther East and also North-west all the enemy's efforts were fruitless. An energetic counter-attack enabled us to retake Thillois.

###### GOOD AVIATION WORK.

During the 27th, 28th and 29th of May, 19 German aeroplanes and two captive balloons were destroyed, and 23 were compelled to land badly damaged. During the night of the 27th-28th bombing planes dropped 23 tons of explosives on bridges and crossings of the Ailette and the Aisne, and on cantonments at Guisacourt and Juvenecourt. During the following night and day they dropped 37 tons of bombs on convoys, troops and stations at Laon, Fismes, etc. Severe explosions were observed at stations at Fismes, Laon, and Concy les Eppeles. A munitions depot was also blown up at Fismes.

Between the 27th and 29th of May six German aeroplanes were brought down by anti-aircraft guns.

###### FRENCH COMMENT.

Paris, May 31st.  
5.30 a.m.

The evening papers generally are calmly confident, but there is a certain amount of discussion on the German surprise although the observation services had previously reported the disappearance of twenty German divisions, from the northern front and the High Command had endeavoured to discover their point of concentration.

M. Sembat, however, like other writers, is confident that the German advance will be stopped. *L'Homme Libre*, which formerly was M. Clemenceau's organ, points out the impossibility of defending with equally strong forces both the sea and Paris which were the two possible enemy objectives and says that the High Command had no choice. It had to prevent at all costs a further advance to the sea and hold less strongly the part facing south where there is more room for manœuvring.

###### AMERICANS REPULSE ATTACK.

LONDON, May 31st.

An American communiqué says:—Enemy attacks on our new positions at Cantigny were again completely repulsed by artillery and infantry. Active artillery continues there and Lorraine where gas shells were used.

###### GERMAN CLAIMS.

LONDON, May 31st.

A German communiqué states that the forts to the north-west of Rheims have fallen and that the prisoners, now numbered 35,000. It claims the capture of a tremendous amount of war material, including guns of the heaviest calibre, and all aerodromes, with machines.

###### EARLIER CABLES.

###### FRENCH IMPROVE POSITION.

LONDON, May 30th.  
9.40 p.m.

Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig reports:—The French, on the night of May 29th, carried out a successful local operation to the east of Dickebusch, improving their position.

There is reciprocal artillery activity on the remainder of the front.

###### AERIAL OPERATIONS.

LONDON, May 30th.

Reporting on aviation, Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig states:—Low clouds and poor visibility prevented much flying on May 29th until late in the day, when the weather cleared.

We brought down five German machines and drove down one out of control. No British machine was lost.

We dropped five tons of bombs during the day on dumps and billets in the neighbourhood of Armentières and Bapaume.

We heavily bombed the railway triangle at Metzablon on the night of May 28th. One British machine was not returned.

We dropped sixteen tons of bombs on the night of May 29th on railway stations at Valenciennes and Busigny, and also on Bruges Docks. All our machines returned.

###### GERMAN ADVANCE STILL UNCHECKED.

LONDON, May 30th.  
7.50 a.m.

Yesterday morning's hope that the Allied resistance on the wings would so narrow the front of the German advance as to make the restoration of the position possible has not been realised, and it is recognised that the enemy success is gaining fresh space for movement at both ends of the line, and this makes the problem more difficult. The enemy is apparently making towards Paris, and if the advance is to be effectively checked, reserves must be brought up with all speed, and in large numbers. Generalissimo Foch does not dare to risk dispersing his main strategic reserves, for the Germans have engaged a comparatively small portion of their available forces.

Some experts estimate that the assailants are not more than twenty-five divisions, hence it is not in any way certain that the present blow is the only, or less menacing attack contemplated, and Generalissimo Foch is accordingly bound to postpone the employment of reserves as long as possible. It is, however, considered unlikely that the French Generalissimo will omit to provide for an offensive directly threatening the capital.

Newspapers view the position with anxiety but not alarm, and dwell on the admirable coolness and resolution of the French, who are sustained by memories of staying the onset of the German hordes, when the latter were as arrogantly confident of a decisive victory as now.

###### FRENCH PRESS COMMENT.

PARIS, May 30th.

The newspapers admit that the German attack is indisputably well conducted. The enemy has advanced sixteen miles in two days. His immediate objective is apparently Rheims.

M. Marcel Sembat writes in *L'Heure*:—"We have received a heavy blow, but less grave than on the Somme, where a breach was made on March 24th. But to-day there is no open door."

M. Henri Bidou, writing in *Journal des Debats*, says that Germany is seeking a decision and must emerge victorious or be destroyed.

*Liberte* says:—"How the Germans are able to surprise us and suddenly appear four times more numerous must be investigated later. Prisoners of May 29th described enormous concentrations of troops and tanks and warned us that the attack was fixed for May 27th. It is impossible for us now to parry the blow by a defensive."

A correspondent of *Liberte* says that the passage of the Aisne by the enemy when the British on the right and the French on the left were still engaged on the opposite bank might have entailed the gravest consequences. The High Command, calmly viewing the situation, entrusted the desperate task of holding the enemy, till their troops with material had crossed the river, to a picked Division whose regiments were all decorated for valour. Most furious fighting developed in the afternoon and the Germans threw in Division after Division. The struggle was extraordinarily desperate, towards Portenly hand-to-hand fighting lasting till nightfall. Artillery on St.

Mard heights, mowed down the enemy masses. The Germans thrice crossed the Aisne between one o'clock in the afternoon and six in the evening without succeeding in ejecting the French heroes from their positions. The village of St. Mard changed hands six times. One regiment withstood repeated assaults by a six times more numerous enemy, and frequently counter-attacked, holding back the enemy until midnight, the hour fixed for the retreat. Thus the Anglo-French troops in the directions of Vailly and Pontavert were saved from envelopment and almost all the material was saved, the remainder being destroyed. After midnight the enemy crossed the Aisne in masses.

###### APPROACHING THE MARNE.

LONDON, May 31st.  
12.10 a.m.

A wireless German official message says:—Southward of Ferent Ardenois we are fighting our way towards the Marne. ADVANCE HAS APPRECIABLY SLACKENED.

LONDON, May 30th.  
6.45 p.m.

Reuter's Correspondent at the French Headquarters, telegraphing on May 29th, says:—The most encouraging feature of the situation to-night is that during the past twenty-four hours the enemy's rate of advance has very appreciably slackened. It is encountering greater difficulties. The enemy, after taking Soissons, pushed out a wing between Soissons and Arcy St. Restitut to an average distance of two miles on his left. The British were forced back in the angle formed by the Vesle and the Aisne and Oise canal. The enemy now surrounds Rheims on three sides and frontally the Germans continue to push in the direction of Ferent-Ardenois and are at grips with the French on the heights south of the river and valley. Our reserves are beginning to arrive on the battlefield. The Germans at present have a superiority of about five to one, and it is calculated that they have engaged about forty Divisions and have another forty in reserve. It is quite possible that they may strike another sudden blow in the direction of Amiens or Dunkirk. The problem for us is to so distribute our reserves as to be able to hold the enemy on both flanks.

Momentarily the enemy's whole strength is in the battle between the Aisne and the Marne. Soissons was taken after fierce street fighting. The Germans, after reaching the centre of the town, were ejected by a French counter-attack, but they renewed the attack and finally pushed back the French to the western edge, which was in flames. The Germans have succeeded in the first three days of the battle in cutting a tetrahedron in our front, the four corners of which are approximately, marked by Crecy-au-Mont and Juvenecourt, north of the Aisne, and by Arcy St. Restitut and Rheims, south of the Aisne.

During May 27th, the enemy advanced about six miles to the bank of the Aisne and on May 28th carried the front forward to the line through Bruys, Villers and Franqueux, another advance of six miles with a maximum depth of nine or ten miles at Bruys. To-day the Germans have gained from two to three miles, although at certain points, notably at Brouillet, they have progressed farther.

###### THE FRENCH FRONT.

###### LONG RANGE BOMBARDMENT AT PARIS.

PARIS, May 31st.

The long-range bombardment was resumed this evening.

###### BATTLE RAGING WITH UNDIMINISHED VIOLENCE.

PARIS, May 31st.

A communiqué states:—The battle has continued with undiminished violence on the whole front. Our troops hanging on to the western outposts of Soissons prevented all enemy progress from there.

Southward we solidly hold the left bank of the Crise. In the Centre the intense struggle has not slackened. The enemy has captured Ferent-Ardenois, and Vezilly and is multiplying his efforts towards Villent-Ardenois.

On the Right as well as North-west of Rheims we are holding on to our positions. Our aviators participated in the battle with endurance and daring beyond all praise. The crews fought against an enemy air force which is very aggressive and most numerous. Flying low they machine-gunned enemy troops and carried out reconnaissance far into the enemy lines. They played an important part in maintaining communications.

###### TO THE MARNE.

LONDON, May 30th.

Reuter's Correspondent at French Headquarters, telegraphing to-day, states:—The enemy is held on the flanks at Soissons and Rheims and is throwing his whole strength, this morning, into a thrust southwards, his obvious goal being the Marne. During the night and early morning he pressed forward about five miles towards the river, advancing his front to the line La Fere-Vezilly. Probably the Germans hope to establish themselves on the Marne with a view to turning the direction of the main effort westwards, trusting to the river to protect their right, as they used the Oise in April. The hottest fighting is proceeding on the whole Southern Front of advance.

This morning, for the first time, reserves were engaged to support the Divisions which have borne the weight of the onslaught since Monday.

###### Aerial Activities.

###### LATEST CABLES.

[THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY.]

###### AIR RAID ON PARIS.

###### NO VICTIMS.

LONDON, May 31st.

A French official message dated to-day states that hostile aeroplanes crossed the lines last evening going towards Paris. The observation posts signalled them and defence batteries shelled them.

The warning was given at 10.59 and the "All clear" signal at midnight. Bombs were dropped in the Paris region but there were no victims.

###### Italian front.

###### EARLIER CABLES.

[THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY.]

###### BATTLES IN TONALE.

LONDON, May 30th.

An Austrian wireless official message states:—Battles in the Tonale region continue.

The enemy's artillery activity in the Adamello region has increased.

We repulsed several enemy attacks south of the Presena glacier.

###### General.

###### LATEST CABLES.

[THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY.]

###### RUSSIAN PEASANT RISING.

Moscow, May 31st.

At Odessa the disarmament of Ukrainian troops carried out by Germans resulted in fusillading after which Hajdamaks and partisans of the Hada with officers were arrested. Peasant troubles are spreading throughout Podolia. Strong detachments of revolutionaries, consisting of demobilised soldiers and peasants armed with machine-guns and artillery revolted at Tschirgine against the Government at Kieff in order to seize the power of the Government. Troops were summoned to suppress the rising.

###### EARLIER CABLES.

###### THE ESCAPED RUSSIAN WARSHIPS.

AMSTERDAM, May 30th.

A message from Kieff states that the crews of the two new Russian Dreadnoughts and of two torpedo-boats, which escaped from Sebastopol prior to the German occupation and are now lying at Novorossiysk, have resolved to blow up their ships, if the Germans reach Novorossiysk.

###### TREATMENT OF WAR PRISONERS.

###### HAGUE CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS QUESTION.

LONDON, May 30th.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Jolson-Hicks asked:—Are the Government satisfied that British prisoners are no longer forced to work immediately behind the German lines? If not, what steps are being taken or proposed to be taken to prevent the continuance of cruelty to our men?

Mr. Macpherson replied:—The treatment of prisoners of war will be generally discussed at a Conference which it is hoped will shortly assemble at The Hague. The discussion will include the employment of prisoners behind the lines.

Mr. George Faber suggested the appointment of a high official with the sole duty of carrying out as soon as possible the direct exchange of all prisoners of war with Germany, Turkey and Bulgaria.

Mr. Hope replied that the possibility of extending the existing arrangements with Turkey and Bulgaria would be considered.

###### LEAFLETS FROM AEROPLANES.

LONDON, May 30th.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Baird stated that the practice of British aeroplanes dropping leaflets had ceased.

###### IRON IN DUTCH EAST INDIES.

AMSTERDAM, May 30th.

Iron-ore beds estimated to contain upwards of a thousand million tons have been discovered on the Island of Celebes, Dutch East Indies. It is expected that their exploitation will be easy.

###### PRINCE OF WALES' VISIT TO THE POPE.

LONDON, May 30th.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Bonar Law informed Mr. Craig that the visit of the Prince of Wales to the Pope was made on the advice of the British Government and was strictly in accordance with precedents.

###### THE SIBERIAN SITUATION.

###### JAPAN'S POLICY OUTLINED.

LONDON, May 30th.

According to the *Daily Mail* correspondent at Tokio, Baron Goto says that neither Japan nor the Allies made any proposal as regards intervention in Siberia, but Japan will sympathetically consider the proposal if and when made. A homogeneous Army is essential to the expedition. It would be therefore better if Japan were allowed to conduct it alone, but Japan never seriously objected to Allied participation. The question of compensation would depend on varying circumstances, but Japan at present is not thinking of compensation, but merely the furthering of the Allied cause. Japan is equally opposed to Bolshevism and German domination. She desires a peaceful and well-ordered China. Baron Goto declared that Great Britain was the factor responsible for the more cordial relations between Japan and America. Baron Goto denied that he was pro-German or anti-English; he was above all Japanese. He thought the war would still last a long time, but he was confident of an Allied victory.

###### SOLEMN APPEAL TO GERMANY.

LONDON, May 31st.

The Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England has prepared a solemn appeal to the same Order in Germany to exert its influence with the Kaiser and his Government to end the sinking of hospital ships, the ill-treatment of prisoners and wounded and other breaches of the Geneva Convention.

The appeal says, in these respects, that "the Kaiser's Government has not always acted in accordance with the ideas and laws of our Christian Brotherhood."

###### AUSTRIAN TORPEDO WORKS BURNED DOWN.

ZURICH, May 31st.

The Whitehead torpedo works at St. Gallen have been burned down. Vienna newspapers affirm that the fire was due to sabotage by Italian workmen.

###### AUSTRIA AND FINLAND SIGN PEACE.

AMSTERDAM, May 30th.

A message from Vienna states that Austria and Finland have signed a Treaty of peace.

###### ECONOMIC TREATY BETWEEN ALLIES AND SWEDEN.

STOCKHOLM, May 31st.

Sweden has concluded an economic treaty with the Allies.

###### THE IRISH PLOT.

LONDON, May 30th.

In the House of Commons, replying to Mr. King, Mr. Shortt said that 69 persons arrested in Ireland were interned in Great Britain.

###### A SINGAPORE PROBLEM IN PARLIAMENT.

LONDON, May 29th.

In the House of Commons, replying to the Hon. T. B. Parnell, Mr. W. A. G. Hewins stated that he had received a full and confidential report from the Governor of the Straits Settlements regarding tolerated brothels in Singapore. Mr. Hewins said he had complete confidence in this connection in the policy of the Governor, who, throughout, had given most careful attention to the matter, in consultation with the official members of the Legislative Council and was anxious to adopt all practicable means which would really effect an improvement and not lead to the substitution of worse evils. The wide variety of races represented in Singapore made the problem peculiarly difficult.

###### THE SILVER MARKET.

LONDON, May 31st.

The silver market is steady.

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